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Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family

Report of the Third Committee

Rapporteur: Mr. Carlos Enrique **García González** (El Salvador)

I. Introduction

1. At its 2nd plenary meeting, on 17 September 2004, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided to include in the agenda of its fifty-ninth session the item entitled:

> "Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family:
>
> (a) Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family;
>
> (b) United Nations Literacy Decade: education for all"

and to allocate it to the Third Committee.

2. The Third Committee considered the item at its 1st to 5th, 7th, 13th, 18th, 29th, 37th, 42nd and 44th meetings, from 4 to 6, and on 11, 14, 19 and 28 October and 4, 11 and 16 November 2004. At its 1st to 4th meetings, the Committee held a general discussion on item 94 jointly with items 93 and 95. An account of the Committee's discussion is contained in the relevant summary records (A/C.3/59/SR.1-5, 7, 13, 18, 29, 37, 42 and 44).

3. For its consideration of the item, the Committee had before it the following documents:

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Item 94
Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family

Letter dated 5 April 2004 from the Permanent Representative of El Salvador to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting a note dated 17 March 2004 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of El Salvador concerning the launching of the Global Commission on International Migration (A/59/73)

Item 94 (a)
Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family

Relevant chapter of the report of the Economic and Social Council[1]

Report of the Secretary-General on the preparations for and observance of the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family in 2004 (A/59/176)

Note by the Secretary-General on monitoring the implementation of the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (E/CN.5/2002/4)

Item 94 (b)
United Nations Literacy Decade: education for all

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization on the implementation of the International Plan of Action for the United Nations Literacy Decade (A/59/267)

4. At the 1st meeting, on 4 October, introductory statements were made by the Director of the Division for Social Policy and Development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat of the United Nations and the representative of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (see A/C.3/59/SR.1).

5. At the same meeting, the Committee engaged in a question-and-answer session with the above-mentioned speakers, in which the delegations of Cuba, the Syrian Arab Republic, the Sudan, Sri Lanka and the Netherlands took part (see A/C.3/59/SR.1).

6. At the 2nd meeting, on 4 October, a statement was made by the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs (see A/C.3/59/SR.2).

7. At the same meeting, the Committee engaged in a question-and-answer session with the Under-Secretary-General, in which the delegations of the Dominican Republic, the Netherlands, Cuba and Sri Lanka took part (see A/C.3/59/SR.2).

8. Also at the same meeting, a presentation was made by the Inspector from the Joint Inspection Unit, who also responded to a question raised by the representative of Senegal (see A/C.3/59/SR.2).

[1] See A/59/3; for the final text, see *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 3* (A/59/3/Rev.1).

II. Consideration of draft proposals

A. Draft resolution A/C.3/59/L.2

9. By its resolution 2004/13 of 21 July 2004, the Economic and Social Council recommended to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft resolution entitled "Celebration of the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family and beyond". The draft resolution was reproduced in document A/C.3/59/L.2.

10. At the 13th meeting, on 14 October, the Committee was advised that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

11. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.3/59/L.2, without a vote (see para. 25, draft resolution I).

B. Draft resolution A/C.3/59/L.18 and Rev.1

12. At the 18th meeting, on 19 October, the representative of Portugal, on behalf of Angola, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, the Dominican Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Monaco, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Turkey and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, introduced a draft resolution entitled "Policies and programmes involving youth", which read:

"*The General Assembly*,

"*Recalling* its resolution 50/81 of 14 December 1995, by which it adopted the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond, annexed thereto,

"*Recalling also* its resolution 58/133 of 22 December 2003, in which it, inter alia, recommended devoting two plenary meetings at its sixtieth session, in 2005, to review the situation of youth and achievements attained in the implementation of the World Programme of Action ten years after its adoption,

"*Recognizing* the importance of the full and effective participation of young people and youth organizations at the local, national, regional and international levels in promoting and implementing the World Programme of Action and in evaluating the progress achieved and the obstacles encountered in its implementation,

"1. *Decides* to convene, at its sixtieth session, two plenary meetings of the General Assembly devoted to the evaluation of the progress made in the implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond, to be held during the general debate of the Third Committee under the agenda item entitled 'Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family';

"2. *Urges* Member States to consider being represented by youth representatives when addressing the plenary on this occasion, taking into account gender balance;

"3. *Decides* that, while applying on an exceptional basis the rules governing previous special sessions of the General Assembly and given the availability of time, a limited number of non-governmental youth organizations which are in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council or which were accredited to the World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth in 1998 may also make statements in the debate in plenary, provided that their application for consultative status with the Council has not been rejected or that their consultative status with the Council has not been withdrawn or suspended, and that non-governmental youth organizations should be requested to select spokespersons and provide the list thereof to the President of the General Assembly through the United Nations Secretariat, and requests the President of the Assembly to present, in a timely manner, the list of selected non-governmental youth organizations to Member States for approval and to ensure that the selection of the organizations is made on an equal and transparent basis, taking into account the geographical representation and diversity of non-governmental youth organizations and the equal representation of young women and men;

"4. *Also decides* that interested non-governmental youth organizations that are not in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council or were not accredited to the World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth in 1998 may participate in the event, that such non-governmental youth organizations should submit their applications for accreditation to the Bureau of the General Assembly and the Secretariat by _____, and that the applications should contain the following information:

"(a) The purpose of the organization;

"(b) Information identifying the programmes and activities of the organization in areas relevant to the subject of the event and indicating in which country or countries the programmes and activities are carried out;

"(c) Confirmation of the activities of the organization at the national, regional or international level;

"(d) Copies of annual or other reports of the organization, together with financial statements and a list of financial sources and contributions, including governmental contributions;

"(e) A list of the members of the governing body of the organization and their countries of nationality;

"(f) A description of the membership of the organization, indicating the total number of members, the names of organizations that are members and their geographical distribution;

"(g) A copy of the constitution and/or by-laws of the organization;

"5. *Further decides* that the Bureau of the General Assembly should submit by _____ to Member States for approval a list of the non-governmental youth organizations which have submitted their applications, that the list should contain information on the competence and relevance of each organization to the subject of the event, and that the list should be submitted to Member States for consideration on a no-objection basis for a final decision by the Assembly on participation;

"6. *Decides* that non-governmental youth organizations whose application for consultative status with the Economic and Social Council has been rejected or whose consultative status with the Council has been withdrawn or suspended should not be accredited to the event;

"7. *Urges*, in recognition of the importance of the equitable geographical participation of non-governmental youth organizations in the event, relevant United Nations bodies to assist non-governmental organizations that do not have the resources, in particular those from countries with economies in transition and from developing countries, including the least developed among them, to participate in the meetings;

"8. *Requests* the Secretary-General to disseminate widely to the community of non-governmental youth organizations all available information on accreditation procedures and information on supportive measures for participation in the event;

"9. *Decides* that an informal, interactive panel discussion on the theme 'Young people: making commitments matter' will be held in the afternoon of the day prior to the event; the Chairman of the informal panel will orally present a summary of the discussions of the panel to the General Assembly at the end of the debate in plenary meeting;

"10. *Agrees* that, in addition to Member States, observers, representatives of the entities of the United Nations system and non-governmental youth organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, an invitation to participate in the informal, interactive panel discussion will be extended to not more than fifteen youth organizations, taking into account equitable geographical distribution. The President of the General Assembly, following appropriate consultations with Member States, will draw up a list of those youth organizations, on the basis of the recommendations of the Secretariat and taking into account the principle of geographical representation, and will submit the list to Member States for consideration on a no-objection basis for a final decision by the Assembly on participation;

"11. *Decides* that the arrangements outlined in paragraphs 3 to 10 above shall in no way create a precedent for other similar events;

"12. *Notes with appreciation* the ongoing efforts made by the United Nations system to solicit input from youth organizations and young people into the current review of the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond, as requested by the General Assembly in paragraph 14 of its resolution 58/133, and invites the Secretary-General to provide an overview of the input gathered from youth organizations to the Assembly at its sixtieth session."

13. At the 37th meeting, on 4 November, the Committee had before it a revised draft resolution (A/C.3/59/L.18/Rev.1), submitted by the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.3/59/L.18, joined by Andorra, Argentina, Australia, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cape Verde, Chile, Costa Rica, Croatia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Estonia, Fiji, Guatemala, Madagascar, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Namibia, Nicaragua, Norway, Panama, Peru, the Philippines, Romania,

the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Timor-Leste, Tunisia, Ukraine and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

14. At the same meeting, the representative of Portugal orally revised the draft resolution as follows:

(a) In operative paragraph 5, the words "*Requests* the Secretary-General to" were replaced by the words "*Decides* to" and the words "in order to enable them to participate in" were revised to read "to participate in the informal round-table discussion and side events to be held during";

(b) After operative paragraph 7, a new operative paragraph 8 was inserted, which read:

"*Decides* that the arrangements outlined in paragraph 5 above shall in no way create a precedent for other similar events;"

(c) Operative paragraph 8 was renumbered accordingly.

Subsequently, Antigua and Barbuda, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belize, Bolivia, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Canada, the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Grenada, Guyana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Israel, Jamaica, Kenya, Malaysia, Malawi, Mali, Morocco, Nigeria, the Republic of Moldova, South Africa, the United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Zambia and Zimbabwe joined in sponsoring the draft resolution, as orally revised.

15. Also at the same meeting, prior to the adoption of the draft resolution, a statement was made by the representative of China (see A/C.3/59/SR.37).

16. At the 37th meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.3/59/L.18/Rev.1, as orally revised, without a vote (see para. 25, draft resolution II).

17. After the adoption of the draft resolution, a statement was made by the representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (see A/C.3/59/SR.37).

C. Draft resolution A/C.3/59/L.15 and Rev.1

18. At the 7th meeting, on 11 October, the representative of Mongolia, on behalf of Belarus, Cameroon, China, Croatia, the Dominican Republic, Ethiopia, Iceland, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mongolia, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, Senegal, Suriname and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, introduced a draft resolution entitled "United Nations Literacy Decade: education for all" (A/C.3/59/L.15), which read:

"*The General Assembly*,

"*Recalling* its resolution 56/116 of 19 December 2001, by which it proclaimed the ten-year period beginning on 1 January 2003 the United Nations Literacy Decade, and resolution 57/166 of 18 December 2002, in which it welcomed the International Plan of Action for the United Nations Literacy Decade,

"*Recalling also* the United Nations Millennium Declaration, in which Member States resolved to ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling and

that girls and boys will have equal access to all levels of education, which requires a renewed commitment to promote literacy for all,

"*Reaffirming* that a basic education is crucial to nation-building, that literacy for all is at the heart of basic education for all and that creating literate environments and societies is essential for achieving the goals of eradicating poverty, reducing child mortality, curbing population growth, achieving gender equality and ensuring sustainable development, peace and democracy,

"*Convinced* that literacy is crucial to the acquisition by every child, youth and adult of the essential life skills that will enable them to address the challenges that they can face in life, and represents an essential step in basic education, which is an indispensable means for effective participation in the societies and economies of the twenty-first century,

"*Affirming* that the realization of the right to education, especially for girls, contributes to the promotion of gender equality and the eradication of poverty,

"*Noting with deep concern* that, while considerable efforts have been made to address the objectives of the Decade at various levels, over 100 million children are not in school and some 800 million adults are illiterate today, that the issue of illiteracy is not sufficiently high on the agendas of both the developed and developing countries of the world to generate the kind of political and economic support required to address global illiteracy challenges, and that the world is unlikely to meet those challenges if the present trends continue,

"*Deeply concerned* about the persistence of the gender gap in education, which is reflected by the fact that nearly two thirds of the world's adult illiterates are women,

"1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General, prepared in cooperation with the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, on the implementation of the International Plan of Action for the United Nations Literacy Decade;

"2. *Welcomes* the efforts made so far by Member States and the international community in launching the Decade and implementing the International Plan of Action;

"3. *Appeals* to all Governments to review on a regular basis the literacy situation in their countries and to establish benchmarks and indicators to monitor the progress made towards achieving the goals of the Decade, backed up by more reliable literacy data and information, and to further reinforce political will, mobilize adequate national resources, develop more inclusive policy-making environments and devise innovative strategies for reaching the poorest and most marginalized groups and for seeking alternative formal and non-formal approaches to learning with a view to achieving the goals of the Decade;

"4. *Urges* all Governments to take the lead in coordinating the activities of the Decade at the national level, bringing all relevant national actors together in a sustained dialogue and collaborative action on policy formulation, implementation and evaluation of literacy efforts, and to report

biennially to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization on the progress achieved in implementing their national programmes and plans of action for the Decade;

"5. *Appeals* to all Governments and professional organizations to strengthen national and professional educational institutions in their countries with a view to expanding their capacity and promoting the quality of education, with particular focus on literacy;

"6. *Appeals* to all Governments and to economic and financial organizations and institutions, both national and international, to lend greater financial and material support to the efforts to increase literacy and achieve the goals of education for all and those of the Decade, through, inter alia, the 20/20 initiative, as appropriate;

"7. *Invites* Member States, the specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system, as well as relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, to intensify their efforts to implement effectively the International Plan of Action, and to substantially integrate those efforts in the Education for All process and within the framework of the internationally agreed developments goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration;

"8. *Requests* the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization to reinforce its lead coordinating role in stimulating and catalysing the activities undertaken at the international level within the framework of the Decade in a manner that is complementary to and coordinated with the ongoing process of Education for All, with the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration, and with other global initiatives, and to take immediate, concrete steps to address the needs of countries with high illiteracy rates and/or with large populations of illiterate adults, with particular regard to women;

"9. *Requests* the Secretary-General, in cooperation with the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, to submit progress reports on the implementation of the International Plan of Action to the General Assembly on a biennial basis, beginning in 2006;

"10. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its sixty-first session, under the item entitled 'Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family', a sub-item entitled 'United Nations Literacy Decade: education for all'."

19. At the 29th meeting, on 28 October, the Committee had before it a revised draft resolution (A/C.3/59/L.15/Rev.1), submitted by the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.3/59/L.15, joined by Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Belize, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Canada, Costa Rica, Cuba, Cyprus, Denmark, Djibouti, El Salvador, Finland, Greece, Guyana, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Morocco, Myanmar, Nepal, the Netherlands, the Niger, Panama, the Philippines, Portugal, Qatar, Tajikistan, Thailand, Tunisia, Ukraine, the United States of America, Uzbekistan and Viet Nam. Subsequently, Angola, Andorra,

Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Fiji, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Monaco, Namibia, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, Sierra Leone, Switzerland, the Syrian Arab Republic, Turkey and Zambia joined in sponsoring the revised draft resolution.

20. At the same meeting, the Committee was advised that the revised draft resolution contained no programme budget implications.

21. At the 29th meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.3/59/L.15/Rev.1 without a vote (para. 25, draft resolution III).

D. Draft decisions proposed by the Chairman

Proposed supplement to the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities

22. At its 42nd meeting, on 11 November, the Vice-Chairperson, Rachel Groux (Switzerland), reported on informal consultations held on the proposed supplement to the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (E/CN.5/2002/4, annex) and read out an oral draft decision.

23. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted the draft decision (see para. 26, draft decision I).

Report of the Secretary-General on the preparations for and observance of the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family in 2004

24. At its 44th meeting, on 16 November, on the proposal of the Chairman, the Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that it take note of the report of the Secretary-General on the preparations for and observance of the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family in 2004 (A/59/176) (see para. 26, draft decision II).

III. Recommendations of the Third Committee

25. The Third Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolutions:

Draft resolution I
Celebration of the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family and beyond

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 44/82 of 8 December 1989, 45/133 of 14 December 1990, 46/92 of 16 December 1991, 47/237 of 20 September 1993, 50/142 of 21 December 1995, 52/81 of 12 December 1997, 54/124 of 17 December 1999, 56/113 of 19 December 2001, 57/164 of 18 December 2002 and 58/15 of 3 December 2003 concerning the proclamation of, preparations for and observance of the International Year of the Family in 1994 and its tenth anniversary in 2004,

Recalling also that relevant United Nations instruments on human rights as well as relevant global plans and programmes of action call for the widest possible protection and assistance to be accorded to the family, bearing in mind that in different cultural, political and social systems various forms of the family exist,

Recalling further that the family is the basic unit of society and, as such, should be strengthened, and that it is entitled to receive comprehensive protection and support,

Noting that the family-related provisions of the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits of the 1990s and their follow-up processes continue to provide policy guidance on ways to strengthen family-centred components of policies and programmes as part of an integrated comprehensive approach to development,

Recognizing that the preparations for and observance of the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family provided a useful opportunity for drawing further attention to the objectives of the Year for increasing cooperation at all levels on family issues,

Recognizing also the commendable efforts made by Governments at the local and national levels in carrying out specific programmes concerning families,

Emphasizing that equality between women and men and respect for all the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all family members are essential to family well-being and to society at large, noting the importance of reconciliation of work and family life, and recognizing the principle that both parents have common responsibilities for the upbringing and development of the child,

Aware that families are affected by social and economic changes, manifested as observable worldwide trends, and that the causes and consequences of those trends concerning families have to be identified and analysed,

Noting with concern the devastating effects of the HIV/AIDS pandemic on family life, as well as the devastating effects on family life of other infectious diseases, such as malaria and tuberculosis,

Noting also with concern the devastating effects of difficult social and economic conditions, armed conflicts and natural disasters on family life,

Recognizing the important role of non-governmental organizations, at both the local and the national levels, working in the interest of families,

Aware that there is a need for continued inter-agency cooperation on the family in order to generate greater awareness of family issues among the governing bodies of the United Nations system,

Recalling that the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family will be observed and celebrated during the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General,[1]

1. *Notes* that the follow-up to the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family is an integral part of the agenda and the multi-year programme of work of the Commission for Social Development until 2006;

2. *Urges* Governments to continue to take sustained action at all levels concerning family issues, including applied studies and research, in order to promote the role of families in development and develop concrete measures and approaches to address national priorities in dealing with family issues;

3. *Urges* the international community to address family-related concerns within the framework of the commitments undertaken at relevant major United Nations conferences and their follow-up processes, including those agreed to in the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS, adopted by the General Assembly at its twenty-sixth special session in June 2001;[2]

4. *Encourages* more inter-agency cooperation within the United Nations system on issues relating to the family;

5. *Encourages* the regional commissions of the United Nations, within existing resources, to further promote the exchange of experiences at the regional level through the provision of technical assistance, including advisory services, to Governments upon request;

6. *Emphasizes* that the Secretariat should continue its important role in the programme of work on family issues within the United Nations system and, in this regard, encourages the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, within existing resources, to continue to cooperate with Governments, the United Nations system and civil society in strengthening national capacities through the implementation of the mandated objectives of the Year, including through:

(a) The provision of policy guidance on emerging issues and trends affecting the family through the preparation of studies and research papers aimed, in particular, at enhancing the role of the family in society;

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[1] E/CN.5/2004/30.

[2] Resolution S-26/2, annex.

(b) The provision of technical assistance to countries, upon request, to enhance, where appropriate, their national capacities in the area of family-related work;

7. *Invites* the Secretary-General, within existing resources, to disseminate a compilation of existing development cooperation activities of the United Nations system in the field of the family for the benefit of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, other relevant United Nations bodies, Member States and observers by the time of the holding of the forty-fourth session of the Commission for Social Development;

8. *Requests* the Secretary-General:

(a) To give appropriate consideration to the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family in preparing for the observance of the International Day of Families on 15 May 2004 and by taking appropriate steps for the celebration of the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family;

(b) To continue to utilize the United Nations Trust Fund on Family Activities to provide financial assistance for activities specific to the family and for projects of direct benefit to it, with special focus on least developed and developing countries;

9. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to report on the implementation of the present resolution to the General Assembly at its sixtieth session.

Draft resolution II
Policies and programmes involving youth: tenth anniversary of the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 50/81 of 14 December 1995, by which it adopted the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond, annexed thereto,

Recalling also its resolution 58/133 of 22 December 2003, in which it, inter alia, recommended devoting two plenary meetings at its sixtieth session, in 2005, to review the situation of youth and achievements attained in the implementation of the World Programme of Action ten years after its adoption,

Recognizing the importance of the full and effective participation of young people and youth organizations at the local, national, regional and international levels in promoting and implementing the World Programme of Action and in evaluating the progress achieved and the obstacles encountered in its implementation,

1. *Decides* to convene, at its sixtieth session, two plenary meetings of the General Assembly devoted to the evaluation of the progress made in the implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond, to be held during the general debate of the Third Committee under the agenda item entitled "Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family";

2. *Decides also* to hold, prior to the plenary meetings, an informal, interactive round-table discussion on the theme "Young people: making commitments matter", which will be open to the participation of Member States, observers, organizations of the United Nations system and non-governmental youth organizations;

3. *Decides further* that one youth representative from a Member State will orally present a summary of the informal round-table discussion to the General Assembly at the beginning of the plenary meeting;

4. *Urges* Member States to consider being represented by youth representatives to address the plenary on this occasion, as well as in the above-mentioned informal round-table discussion, bearing in mind the principle of gender balance;

5. *Decides* to facilitate access to United Nations Headquarters by the non-governmental organizations that were accredited to the World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth in 1998 and interested non-governmental organizations that are neither in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council nor were accredited to the World Conference to participate in the informal round-table discussions and side events to be held during the tenth anniversary of the World Programme of Action for Youth;

6. *Urges*, in recognition of the importance of ensuring the equitable geographical participation of non-governmental youth organizations in the tenth

anniversary of the World Programme of Action for Youth, relevant United Nations entities to assist non-governmental organizations that do not have the resources, in particular non-governmental organizations from developing countries, including the least developed countries and countries with economies in transition, to participate in the tenth anniversary;

7. *Requests* the Secretary-General to disseminate widely to the community of non-governmental youth organizations all available information on the events associated with the tenth anniversary of the World Programme of Action for Youth;

8. *Decides* that the arrangements outlined in paragraph 5 above shall in no way create a precedent for other similar events;

9. *Notes with appreciation* the ongoing efforts of the United Nations system to solicit input from youth organizations and young people into the current review of the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond, as requested by the General Assembly in paragraph 14 of its resolution 58/133, and invites the Secretary-General to provide an overview of the input gathered from youth organizations as a supplement to his report to the Assembly at its sixtieth session.

Draft resolution III
United Nations Literacy Decade: education for all

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 56/116 of 19 December 2001, by which it proclaimed the ten-year period beginning on 1 January 2003 the United Nations Literacy Decade, and resolution 57/166 of 18 December 2002, in which it welcomed the International Plan of Action for the United Nations Literacy Decade,

Recalling also the United Nations Millennium Declaration,[1] in which Member States resolved to ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling and that girls and boys will have equal access to all levels of education, which requires a renewed commitment to promote literacy for all,

Reaffirming that a basic education is crucial to nation-building, that literacy for all is at the heart of basic education for all and that creating literate environments and societies is essential for achieving the goals of eradicating poverty, reducing child mortality, curbing population growth, achieving gender equality and ensuring sustainable development, peace and democracy,

Convinced that literacy is crucial to the acquisition by every child, youth and adult of the essential life skills that will enable them to address the challenges that they can face in life, and represents an essential step in basic education, which is an indispensable means for effective participation in the societies and economies of the twenty-first century,

Affirming that the realization of the right to education, especially for girls, contributes to the promotion of gender equality and the eradication of poverty,

Welcoming the considerable efforts that have been made to address the objectives of the Decade at various levels,

Noting with concern that over 100 million children are not in school and some 800 million adults are illiterate today, that the issue of illiteracy may not be sufficiently high on national agendas to generate the kind of political and economic support required to address global illiteracy challenges, and that the world is unlikely to meet those challenges if the present trends continue,

Deeply concerned about the persistence of the gender gap in education, which is reflected by the fact that nearly two thirds of the world's adult illiterates are women,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General, prepared in cooperation with the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, on the implementation of the International Plan of Action for the United Nations Literacy Decade,[2] as well as the report prepared by the Joint Inspection Unit[3] on achieving the universal primary education goal of the United Nations Millennium Declaration;[1]

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[1] See resolution 55/2.

[2] See A/59/267.

[3] See A/59/76 and Add.1 and Add.1/Corr.1.

2. *Welcomes* the efforts made so far by Member States and the international community in launching the Decade and implementing the International Plan of Action;

3. *Appeals* to all Governments to develop reliable literacy data and information and to further reinforce political will, mobilize adequate national resources, develop more inclusive policy-making environments and devise innovative strategies for reaching the poorest and most marginalized groups and for seeking alternative formal and non-formal approaches to learning with a view to achieving the goals of the Decade;

4. *Urges* all Governments to take the lead in coordinating the activities of the Decade at the national level, bringing all relevant national actors together in a sustained dialogue and collaborative action on policy formulation, implementation and evaluation of literacy efforts;

5. *Appeals* to all Governments and professional organizations to strengthen national and professional educational institutions in their countries with a view to expanding their capacity and promoting the quality of education, with particular focus on literacy;

6. *Appeals* to all Governments and to economic and financial organizations and institutions, both national and international, to lend greater financial and material support to the efforts to increase literacy and achieve the goals of education for all and those of the Decade, through, inter alia, the 20/20 initiative,[4] as appropriate;

7. *Invites* Member States, the specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system, as well as relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, to intensify their efforts to implement effectively the International Plan of Action, and to substantially integrate those efforts in the Education for All process and other initiatives and activities of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and within the framework of the internationally agreed developments goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration;

8. *Requests* the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization to reinforce its lead coordinating role in stimulating and catalysing the activities undertaken at the international level within the framework of the Decade in a manner that is complementary to and coordinated with the ongoing process of Education for All, with the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration, and with other global initiatives;

9. *Requests* all relevant entities of the United Nations system, particularly the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, in cooperation with national Governments, to take immediate, concrete steps to address the needs of countries with high illiteracy rates and/or with large populations of illiterate adults, with particular regard to women;

[4] See *Report of the World Summit for Social Development, Copenhagen, 6-12 March 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.8), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II, para. 88 (*c*).

10. *Requests* the Secretary-General, in cooperation with the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, to seek the views of Member States on the progress achieved in implementing their national programmes and plans of action for the Decade and to submit progress reports on the implementation of the International Plan of Action to the General Assembly on a biennial basis, beginning in 2006;

11. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its sixty-first session, under the item entitled "Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family", a sub-item entitled "United Nations Literacy Decade: education for all".

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26. The Third Committee also recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft decisions:

Draft decision I
Proposed supplement to the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities

The General Assembly, taking note of Economic and Social Council resolution 2004/15 of 21 July 2004, decides to postpone consideration of the issue until its sixty-first session at the latest and requests the Special Rapporteur on disability of the Commission for Social Development to take into account the general ideas contained in the proposed supplement to the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities[1] in the accomplishment of her mandate.

Draft decision II
Report of the Secretary-General on the preparations for and observance of the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family in 2004

The General Assembly takes note of the report of the Secretary-General on the preparations for and observance of the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family in 2004.[2]

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[1] E/CN.5/2002/4, annex.
[2] A/59/176.